

to the mounting board at one end and fastened by a bolt and fly-nut at the other end.

Two of the nests occupied by the House Swift were inspected on a few occasions in July-August by removing the nests from the mounting board. The first time one nest was opened, a bird was sitting on two eggs. It stayed on the eggs till the nest was placed back in position. The bird then came out of the nest and flew off. On another occasion the sitting bird flew off the open nest. The plate shows one of the birds sitting on its eggs in the nest. Both the parent swifts roosted in the nest at night. Occasionally when the garage door was closed in the evenings, the birds would circle over the garage till the door was opened. The second nest contained 3 eggs. On a later inspection it contained two nestlings. Both the nests had feathers plastered here and there inside. The joint between the nest and the board on which it was mounted was glued all round by the birds.

Wiretailed Swallows inspected all 4 nests put up for them and finally occupied two. The birds added some mud to the edge of the nests they occupied, as seen in the photograph.

Thanks are due to the officers of the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, who very kindly gave permission to install the artificial nests in the verandahs of their bungalows and at other locations. Thanks are also due to Shri K. M. Vaid of the Forest Research Institute for the two photographs.

NEW FOREST,
DEHRA DUN, U.P.
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JOSEPH GEORGE

10. A LEATHERY TURTLE *DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA* (LINNAEUS) COMING ASHORE FOR LAYING EGGS DURING THE DAY

Sometime ago an interesting instance of the leathery turtle coming ashore for laying eggs during the day came to my notice and this is recorded here, since from the available literature it is seen that turtles in general come ashore for this purpose only during night time.

While at Calicut, Kerala, I received information at about 5 p.m. on 2nd July 1956 that a large turtle had come ashore at West Hill and had deposited eggs. I reached the place in a few minutes' time and found a giant specimen of the leathery turtle *Dermochelys*

coriacea (Linnaeus) hardly 50 metres from the sea surrounded by a large crowd of people. On enquiry it was learnt that the turtle first came ashore at about 3.00 p.m. nearly a quarter of a mile to the south and evidently disturbed by the presence of people returned to the sea and came up to the present spot which was comparatively a more quiet place. After scooping out sand with its flippers it had laid between ninety and hundred eggs which were immediately removed by the local people who had assembled there. As characteristic of turtles at egg-laying time it was reported to have been very little disturbed by the presence of people around or by the noise and commotion that prevailed there. The egg-laying was over by the time I reached the place and the turtle was by then making efforts to cover up the nest quite oblivious to the fact that all the eggs were already removed. It was a sunny day but the sand was moist on account of the rain during previous days. After turning over a good deal of sand with its flippers it proceeded towards the sea. On coming to the shore line which had an abrupt drop due to the wave action it slid down sideways and then steadied itself and entered the water. The first wave it confronted dragged it for some distance towards the shore but soon it appeared to recover from the initial inertia, and proceeded with ease in a north-westerly direction and gradually disappeared from sight.

The total length of the turtle from snout to tail taken in a straight line was 6 ft. 3 in. The width of the carapace along the curvature was 3 ft. 10 in. and in a straight line 2 ft. 10 in. The body was slate coloured with white spots and a mottled white patch was present on the head. Some eggs were purchased from the people who had collected them and were examined: They were white in colour, and spherical with a leathery shell, and had an average diameter of 52.5 mm. A few of the eggs were kept buried in the sand but these failed to hatch out. Those opened at periodic intervals did not show any developing embryos.

The fishing canoes belonging to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Station at Calicut are kept near the place where the turtle had laid the eggs and the fieldmen in charge of them informed me subsequently that they had seen on a few occasions in previous years young turtles proceeding to the sea from this area, pursued and harassed by crows. No one has actually seen any turtle coming ashore near this spot formerly and in the absence of specimens of young turtles it is not possible to say anything as to their identity.

Deraniyagala in TETRAPOD REPTILES OF CEYLON Vol I, 1939 has given detailed notes on the egg-laying habits of the various turtles in Indo-Ceylon waters. According to him the leathery turtle comes ashore

only during night time, generally between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. It probably lays eggs three or four times a year but the breeding season in Ceylon reaches its peak during May and June. The incubation period is about 70 days.

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH STATION,
MANDAPAM CAMP,
November 15, 1958.

S. JONES

[M. W. F. Tweedie (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London* **123**: 273-74—1953/54) gives a graphic illustrated account of the nesting and egg-laying habits of this turtle observed at night.—EDS.]

11. THE GOURAMY *OSPHRONEMUS GOURAMI* IN CEYLON

With the present accent on the increasing of fish production from inland waters, the history of the introduction of the Gouramy (*Osphronemus gourami* Lacep.) into Ceylon waters may be of some interest to Fishery Administrators in the tropics. The gouramy is widely grown in Indonesia and to some extent in Malaya, in both of which countries it is highly esteemed as a food fish. The first supplies of this fish were brought into Ceylon from Java (as the country was then known) by the late Mr. G. M. Fowler in 1900, but none of this stock survived. In 1909 a further supply was brought from Java to Colombo by the late Mr. Kelway Bamber, and these were distributed among the reservoirs at Mahavilla Estate in Ulapane, at an elevation of about 2000 ft., at Drayton Estate in Kotagala, at an elevation of 4100 ft., and at Hiyare near Galle, which is almost at sea-level. Some specimens were kept under observation in an outdoor cement-rendered tank in the Colombo Museum premises, where the heat of the sun in the shallow confines of the tank appeared to be having an adverse effect on the fish; these fish were therefore transferred to an ornamental pond lying below the Thwaites Memorial building in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Peradeniya, at an elevation of about 1500 ft.

This pond lies beside the Mahaweli river, and in subsequent years there were a number of occasions on which the river rose at flood time to such an extent that this pond at Peradeniya was submerged. It is also noteworthy that the reservoirs at Ulapane and Kotagala lie on tributaries of this same river. In 1935, it was reported that a hitherto unfamiliar fish was being taken in increasing quantities by fishermen in the flood lakes or *villus* around Mannampitiya, about 100 miles down the Mahaweli river from Peradeniya. Specimens